

Minutes of the Suffield Economic Development Commission
February 21, 2019 – Town Hall – 8:30 a.m.

Members present: Susan Thorner, Brian Banak, Jack Henrie, Bob Kelly, Arnie Magid
Also present: First Selectman Melissa Mack, Director of Planning & Development, Bill Hawkins, Recording Secretary, Ellie Binns, EDC Consultant Kevin Bielmeier.

1. Co-Chair Brian Banak called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.
2. Introduction of new members. Mr. Banak introduced newly appointed members, Jack Henrie as a full member and Bob Kelly as an alternate.
3. Minutes

Review of the minutes of the December 20, 2018 meeting was tabled until the March meeting.

4. Public Input – There was no public input.
5. Discussion with Peoples Bank representatives.

Margaret Lenihan, Matthew Bannister, and Gina Scherbner were present to introduce themselves to the Commission and give an overview of First Suffield Bank a division of Peoples Bank which is headquartered in Western Massachusetts. Senior Vice President, Lenihan spoke of the commitment of the bank to continue in the tradition of being a community oriented bank and noted that the “customer facing” employees will remain with First Suffield Bank. They are already contributing to local organizations and non-profits and plan to further their involvement. She stressed that as a division of Peoples Bank they are bringing enhanced technology to their customers and have the capacity to help small businesses with easy access to services. Ms. Lenihan said they have a community focus and their goal is to service their customers “from the eyes of the consumer with a goal of frictionless service”. They look forward to working with the Town.

6. Discussion with Terri Rockefeller of Colliers International

Terri Rockefeller of Colliers International updated the Commission on the listing of the former Lincoln Technical Institute property located at 1760 Mapleton Ave. This is a 56 acre parcel with a building which currently is set up with 164 dormitory style residential units, meeting rooms, kitchen facilities, a gym and numerous other amenities. The property has been vacant since November of 2012 and there have been several inquiries from a variety of organizations, but there has not been an acceptable offer to date. Commission members did some brain storming with Ms. Rockefeller to talk about potential uses. She noted that environmental studies were done on the property and did not find any environmental issues. The Commission and Ms. Rockefeller will work to promote this piece of property.

7. Town Center Development

Mr. Hawkins reported that the Board of Selectmen voted at their last meeting to endorse the location of a new Highway Garage on the corner of East Street South and Harvey Lane which was the previous location of Wickes Lumber. They further gave the First Selectman the ability to negotiate with the property owner. The proposal will go to the Board of Finance and if

approved by that body, will be scheduled for a Town Meeting vote. The EDC is in support of this project that will open up Ffyer Place for economic development and will draft a letter to that effect. Mr. Hawkins noted that a new business, Hits and Kicks has opened in the Mountain Road Market Place and that their new sign matches the other new signs in the plaza. They took advantage of the 50% matching grant for the sign which is a Commission initiative. Ms. Mack reported on the progress with Kent Memorial Library and said that the remediation work is going well and reports are in to the EPA.

8. Light Industrial Development

JSW Media's building has received a certificate of occupancy and was a project that went smoothly. It is an example of how a facility can be built in a seven month period.

Mr. Bielmeier reported on the recent visit to MetFin Shotblast Systems and the continuation of visits to various businesses in town. EDC members are always welcomed to attend.

9. Staff/Consultant Report

Mr. Bielmeier distributed his report updating the Commission on the activities related to economic development and highlighted opportunities for EDC member involvement. He reported on last week's small business seminar which was videotaped and will be made available online. There are two more workshops scheduled on March 19th and April 17th. Members discussed possible topics for future workshops. Mr. Hawkins reported that the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development first "Listening Session" is planned for February 27th at the Suffield Volunteer Ambulance Building on Bridge St. and members and the public are welcomed to attend.

10. Executive Session

Ms. Thorner moved to go into executive session at 9:54 am to discuss Highway Garage negotiations with Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Bielmeier and Ms. Mack to be included. The motion was seconded by Mr. Henrie and approved unanimously. The Commission came out of Executive Session at 10:12 am with no action taken.

11. Adjournment

Having no further business to come before the Commission, Ms. Thorner moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:13 am. The motion was seconded by Mr. Henrie and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Ellie Binns, Recording Secretary